

St. Mary's of the Assumption Church  
Park Avenue at Main Street  
Park City  
Summit County  
Utah

HABS No. U-35

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UTAH  
22-PARK  
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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## ST. MARY'S OF THE ASSUMPTION CHURCH

Location: Park Avenue at Main Street, Park City, Summit  
County, Utah  
Latitude: 40° 38' 38" 24" N Longitude: 111° 29° 39" W

Present Owner: St. Mary's of the Assumption Catholic Church

Present Occupant: St. Mary's Catholic Church

Present Use: Church and school

Statement of  
Significance: This is the oldest Catholic School and church in  
the Diocese of Salt Lake City and the State of Utah.

PART I. HISTORICAN INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: St. Mary's of the Assumption Catholic Church
2. Date of erection: 1883
3. Architect, builder, suppliers, etc.: Unknown
4. Original plan and construction: School and church were built of stone, standing side by side, approximately the same size.
5. Alterations and additions: Repairs after the fire in January 1950 considerably altered the interior of the church. No architect was used. Father Kennedy, the Pastor, and his congregation had the church repaired and it was rededicated in June 1950.

## B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Buildings:

This is the oldest Catholic School and Church in the Diocese of Salt Lake City and in Utah. The present Pastor is Father Patrick Curran. It pre-exists the Diocese by almost eight years, the Diocese having been established by Pope Leo XIII on January 27, 1891. From 1873 to 1878, a priest by the name of Father Lawrence Scanlan made regular visits to this mining camp and held mass in Simon's Hall on Main Street, where now stands the old New Park Hotel. (Father Scanlan later became the first Bishop of Salt Lake City.) The congregation soon found the hotel lobby too small and decided to build a church. A plot of ground was obtained on the west slope of the canyon,

and a frame church and school were built in the fall in 1881 and spring of 1882. It was the first church in Park City, and its first pastor was Father P. Blake. The school was operated by the Sisters of the Holy Cross from Indiana, and in its opening year had a total of 133 students. On July 4, 1883 fire, set by a pyromaniac "to get even with the townspeople who, he considered, had mistreated him" destroyed the church and school buildings, but they were immediately rebuilt of stone and school commenced again that fall. (Other accounts date the fire on July, 1884, and one states that the fire occurred in 1885.) The depression, the silver mining slumps and other circumstances forced the school to close in 1933, but it is still used for religious classes taught by the Missionary Sisters of Victory Noel. In 1950, fire struck the church and severely damaged it, but it was repaired and re-dedicated in June, 1950.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Bibliography:

Harris, W.R. The Catholic Church in Utah, 1776-1909, Salt Lake City, 1909.

Hansen, Clyde W. A History of the Development of Non-Mormon Denominational Schools in Utah, Masters Thesis, University of Utah.

The Intermountain Catholic Register, January 14, 1966.

Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2, April, 1960.

Woodbury, J. Weston. A History of the Park City School District, M.S. Thesis, University of Utah, 1960.

Worlds' Fair Ecclesiastical History of Utah. George Q. Cannon & Sons, Publishers, 1893.

D. Likely Sources not yet Investigated:

A History in Catholic Education in Utah. Sister M. des Victoires, Masters Thesis, University of Notre Dame.

Prepared by John L. Guisti, AIA  
September 4, 1967

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest: This is an early Catholic Church in a Utah mining town.
2. Condition of fabric: Good, but much altered.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The church is a single-story 35' 6" x 82' rectangle.
2. Foundations: Limestone
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Buff colored limestone, coursed range ashlar.
4. Structural system, framing: Masonry bearing walls with wood framed floor and roof.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The entrance is a pair of wood, five cross panel doors. The gothic arch is outlined with three soldier courses of brick starting at the springline; a cross is incised in the stone keystone. The tympanum is filled with glass in a rectangular grid of muntins.
  - b. Cornice: Simple cornice with returns.
  - c. Tower: The present belltower is smaller than the one shown in early pictures.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Little of historic interest remains.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. Orientation: The entrance faces Park Avenue on the northeast. A high retaining wall raises the site above the street and the mountainside rises steeply behind the site to the southwest.

2. Outbuildings: St. Mary of the Assumption School is adjacent on the southeast.
3. Landscaping and walks, enclosures: A concrete walk crosses in front of the church and steps at two locations lead down to the street.

Prepared by Paul Goeldner, AIA  
Supervisory Architect  
Utah Project 1967  
July 18, 1967

### PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This record is part of a Utah Survey conducted in the summers of 1967 and 1968 under joint sponsorship of the Historic American Buildings Survey of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation of the National Park Service and the Utah Heritage Foundation.

Field work, historic research and record drawings were done under the direction of Project Supervisor Paul Goeldner, AIA (Texas Tech University) assisted by Project Historian John L. Giusti, AIA (University of Utah). Photographs were made by P. Kent Fairbanks of Salt Lake City.

Student Assistant Architects on the 1967 team were Robert M. Swanson and Charles W. Barrow, (University of Texas) and Kenneth L. Lambert and Keith Sorenson, (University of Utah). 1968 Student Assistant Architects were Keith Sorenson, Charles D. Harker and Robert Schriever, (University of Utah) and Donald G. Prycer, (Texas A. & M. University).